

J. Z. Goodrich

Slavery in the U.S.

House of Representatives,

WASHINGTON, JUNE 29, 1854.

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DEAR SIR :

A Society has been organized in this city (called the Union Emigration Society) by such members of Congress and citizens generally, as were opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the opening of Nebraska and Kansas to the introduction of Slavery. Herewith you will receive a printed copy of its Constitution and By-Laws.—The objects of the Society as briefly stated in the preamble and 5th Article of the Constitution, and in the 11th, 12th, and 13th sections of the by-laws, cannot fail to be approved by every friend of Liberty, and of the true principles of our Federal Constitution and Union.

We know that Slavery has been every where and at all times, and must, from its very nature, continue to be aggressive. But the passage of the bill to organize territorial governments for Nebraska and Kansas, which declares that the provision of the law of 1820 prohibiting Slavery forever in these territories, is inoperative and void, leaves no room to doubt that the Slaveholding power of our government and country, has entered upon a career of aggression more bold and daring than has ever before been attempted. Not only are no farther legal barriers to be interposed to prevent the extension of Slavery, but those which were erected by our fathers are to be broken down, so that there shall be no law to stay it back in its march to supreme power and dominion.

To this end, by means of *Compromises and Concessions*, it has been gathering strength for a whole generation. Emboldened by its late success, it has thrown off the mask, and entered boldly and successfully upon the work of removing all legal obstructions to its progress. And what is it that has given to Slavery—in itself an element of weakness—such great power?—It is its alliance with the subservient political power of the North. Not only those who hold slaves, but a powerful party of men born and reared at the North, with the immense power and patronage of the National Government in their hands, have lent their utmost aid and influence to open the vast territories of Kansas and Nebraska, consecrated to freedom by a compromise hitherto deemed sacred and inviolable, to the introduction of slavery. A few Southern men of patriotic, noble, generous, and just impulses, denounced and resisted to the last the abrogation of that part of this compromise which was to enure to the benefit of freedom and the North, (for it was only that, slavery and the south having received their part,) but they were overborne by the votes of fourteen Senators and forty-four Representatives from the free states. The rights of the North have been surrendered, and the interests of freedom jeopardized by Northern men.

Thus by means of Northern compliance, Slavery has become the controlling power in our Government. It shapes our Foreign and Domestic policy—dictates appointments to office—declares war—annexes territory—makes Compromises on its own terms, and violates them at its pleasure. A representative, from a Slave State, spoke of the Nebraska bill, while advocating its passage, as “*the basis of a grand movement in this country.*” Another representative from a Slave State, who opposed that bill, and who is well advised in regard to the items of this “Grand Movement” for the spread of Slavery at home

and abroad, suggests that it will probably embrace “the payment of hundreds of millions of dollars, (in addition to the ten millions just called for) for further slices of Mexican territory, till the whole is absorbed; the offer of two hundred to two hundred and fifty millions of dollars for Cuba, with the alternative (should the offer be rejected) of war with Spain, and incidentally with France and England; an alliance with Russia; an alliance with the east end of the island of San Domingo, to conquer the west, or Haytian part; the appointment of Judges in Nebraska and Kansas, who will nullify all laws which stand in the way of the establishment of Slavery; the creation of twelve Federal Judgeships at salaries of \$4,000 to \$4,500 for the same purpose; the repeal of the Neutrality Laws, to turn loose the robbers and pirates of the world, under the American flag, on Cuba, Porto Rico, and San Domingo; an alliance with the Emperor of Brazil to establish Slavery in the valley of the Amazon; the increase of the Army and Navy to propagate Slavery; the appointment of Slavery propagandists to all Missions and other offices abroad, and the appointment of no persons to offices at home who are opposed to Slavery.

Those who know most of the ulterior designs of the Slave Power, believe that this “grand movement,” the basis of which has been laid in the passage of the Nebraska bill, embraces substantially all this, and more. A proposition has recently been made in the Senate and favorably reported upon, to abrogate the 8th article of the Treaty with Great Britain in regard to the suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa.—Already it is proposed, in the name of Religion and Philanthropy, to repeal all laws prohibiting the importation of slaves. And why should they not be repealed?—If the right of self government, or the doctrine of popular sovereignty, secures, or ought to secure, to one man the right to hold his fellow-man in perpetual bondage in the Territories of the Union,—and the argument for the repeal of the Missouri restriction has been based upon this as a fundamental principle—why should it not secure the right to import slaves? Other property may be taken to the Territories under the protection of law; and it is insisted that to prohibit slaveholders from taking their slave property to the Territories under like protection, would be a denial of the right of equality. Therefore, as other property may be imported, why does not the same doctrine of equality give the right to import Slave property? The principle is as applicable to the right of importation, as to the right of Emigration; and the proposition to repeal all laws prohibiting the importation of slaves, has recently been seriously and earnestly advocated in some of the Slaveholding States. And who can reasonably doubt, judging from the past, that this proposition will, in due time, be carried successfully through both Houses of Congress, and receive the signature of the President? Unless this “grand movement” is arrested, we may count upon this, and at no very distant day, with almost as much certainty as upon the lapse of time.

To oppose these designs of the Slaveholding power, by all lawful and proper means, is the object of this society; and we bespeak your most earnest co-operation. And what should first be done?—This question the Directors of the Society here, which is intended to act as a central Society, with auxiliaries

throughout all the States, have considered. And first of all, concert of action, as far as possible, should be secured among all who are opposed to the objects contemplated by this "grand movement." Without this, however perfectly they may agree in sentiment and opinion, there can be no certainty of success.

While, therefore, we may differ as Whigs, Democrats, or Free-Soilers, on matters of national, or local and state policy, we agree to regard and treat the great interests of human Freedom as of paramount importance, and to suffer no minor questions to endanger those interests. In the language of our 13th By-Law, "Neither party names, nor past differences shall separate us in pursuit of the objects of this society, and in view of our responsibilities as citizens of a free country, we cast it to utter oblivion by-gone questions and effete ideas, and upon the platform of 1776, we constitute ourselves a BROTHERHOOD OF LIBERTY."

The interests of Freedom may not unfrequently be best promoted by means of existing local and political organizations. When this is the case, such organizations should be preserved and used for this purpose.

This Society will co-operate, heartily and in good faith, with all the friends of Freedom, without distinction of party names or ties, in the promotion, by lawful and proper means, of all measures designed and calculated to secure to every individual all the rights guaranteed to him by the Constitution of the United States. For this purpose it will "step to the verge of Constitutional power"—not a hair's breadth beyond it.

We propose to encourage directly, or indirectly through other organizations, the Emigration to Kansas and Nebraska, of such persons as shall be opposed to the introduction of Slavery into the same, and in favor of repealing all laws that may be passed tolerating Slavery in the territories; and especially to promote all objects which, in the judgement of the Directors, are best adapted to *prevent the extension of Slavery into any part of this Continent now free.*

Our watchword is CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOM everywhere within the jurisdiction of the United States, and no extension of Slavery on this Continent. Plans best adapted to secure this

object should be formed and carried out systematically and efficiently. The Emigration to Kansas, of persons opposed to Slavery, should not only be encouraged, but as soon as the popular will can be expressed under the forms of the Constitution, Slavery should be prohibited by a law of Congress, in all the territories of the United States; and thus the original policy of the Government, established by its founders, when the ordinance of 1787 was adopted, should be restored.

There is now no obligation in compromises, legal or moral, to prevent a return to this original policy of our fathers. In this view the approaching election of representatives to the next Congress, is one of great importance. No proper effort should be omitted to stimulate a just public sentiment on the Slavery issue, as now presented, throughout all the States; and especially in all those Congressional Districts whose representatives have so recently and defiantly violated the popular will and the public conscience, by voting to repeal the Missouri Compromise. Under such a public sentiment, those representatives cannot fail to be held to a just responsibility. Not one of them should be returned to a future Congress.

And while the fact that a member voted for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, will be sufficient evidence of his disloyalty to the interests of Freedom, it is not safe to assume that because a member voted against that measure, he is therefore entitled to the confidence of the opponents of Slavery. Truth constrains us to say that some, on the question of the final passage of the bill, recorded their names in the negative, who, on various side motions, indicated no hostility to it, and since its passage have inculcated acquiescence. Let the opponents of the Extension of Slavery be careful to return no member to Congress in whose capacity and integrity they cannot undoubtingly rely in all future struggles with the Slave power.

You are invited to open a correspondence with the officers of this society.

Your obedient servant,

J. Z. GOODRICH, *President.*